

[William G. Urton]

Redfield, Georgia B.

Boswell, New Mexico

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Source of Information:

W.C. Urton, son of Willam G. Urton.

WILLIAM G. URTON

Pioneer Cattle and Ranchman

Agriculturist. A Leader in Farm Irrigation

And Drainage Imporvement. Liberal Contributor

To Educational and Cultural Development.

William G. Urton, a stockholder in the Cass Land and Cattle Company, came to New Mexico in 1884, with the first heard of cattle for the company, which was the beginning of the cattle industry, in the Cedar Canyon country sixty miles Northeast of Roswell.

The Seven H. L. Ranch headquarters for the cattle became widely known as one of the largest and most successful cattle ranches of Southeast New Mexico.

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The organizers and stockholders of the cattle company which was organized at Pleasant Hill Cass County Missouri were: J. D. Cooley, Lee Easley, Ben Duncan, Perry Craig, Harvey Russell, William Meyers, John C. Knorp and William G. and W. C. Urton, Senior.

William G. Urton and J. D. Cooley drove the first cattle over from Fort Griffin Texas where they had been gathered by Lee Easley.

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In 1900 Mr. Urton moved to Roswell where he built a spacious modern house on a farm three miles northeast of the town, where he was engaged in farming for over twenty-eight years - until the time of his death in [1929?].

Mr. Urton was born in Tyler County West Virginia January 27, 1843. He was married in Cass County Missouri, November 16, 1875 to Miss Maria Worrell, who was born November 3, 1840, in Carroll County Virginia. Mr. and Mrs. Urton were the parents of two sons William Cooley and Benjamin Worrell Urton, who were six and four years old 1 respectively, when they came with their parents to New Mexico.

The first three thousand two year old heifers brought across the Staked Plains from Fort Griffin were branded at the Seven K. L. Ranch and turned loose on grazing lands extending from the Texas line on the South almost to Las Vegas on the North.

There was no railroad closer than 150 miles until ten years after Mr. Urton brought his family to that section of the Territory. In 1894 a part of the Santa Fe Railroad system was completed from Eddy (now Carlsbad) to Roswell

The first few years on the ranch all members of the Urton family who were known as the Missourians - experienced all of hardships of the new rough country, where there were no schools, churches or home comforts.

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While there was plenty of water, except during long drouth periods, there were constant troubles and feuds over land and water rights, and there were losses by [?] cattle thieving and Indian raids. All of the dangers especially from Indians furnished exciting thrills for the little Urton boys but were not enjoyed by their parents.

Groceries were brought by ox wagans from Las Vegas, 150 miles distance. On one occasion supplies ordered by Mr. Urton for Thanksgiving, arrived the following April. Another time when supplies had given out, a wagon load of jerked (dried) buffalo meat was reported to be in camp on a wagon trail near. Mr. Urton bought some which was eaten and enjoyed by candle light. The next morning the entire lot of meat was found to be alive with hide bugs.

News that came by mail from Fort Stanton was always old When received. A letter to Mr. Urton telling of the illness of his 3 mother in Missouri was delivered three weeks after her death.

One could die or get well before a physician could attend any sickness on the ranch. A messenger was once sent to Roswell for Dr. E. A. Skipwith to attend Benjamin Urton, who sick with measles was almost recovered when the doctor arrived at the ranch three days later. Mr. Urton's wife when bitten by a mad-dog was driven by buckboard sixty miles to Roswell, and was taken from there to Abilens, Texas for-mad-stone treatment. The wound had almost healed before she could have the treatment. But for the timely arrival and prompt treatment by a cow-boy visitor at the ranch, on another memorable occasion, it is very likely members of Mr. Urton's family would have died from ptomaine poisoning.

Mr. Urton often regretted the lonely lift his wife was compelled to lead an the ranch. Six months would some times pass during which time she would not even see a white woman. Without newspapers or convenient calendars to mark the passage of time, she once worked all day Sunday preparing for the Sabbath dinner which she thought would be the next day.

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The children attended a district school on the ranch in which the teacher and expenses were paid for, only three months. The rest of the term it was conducted as a private school, paid for by Mr, Urton and other parents of children on the ranch and neighboring ranches.

After an Indian raid in Southeast New Mexico, Mr. Urton and his family saw five hundred Indians, conducted by sixteen soldier guards, pass the ranch that were being changed from one reservation to another.

In 1889 J. J. Cox on the adjoining ranch to the Seven H. L.

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Ranch was taken sick and died. His ranch and ranch lands of others who had grown discouraged were bought by the Cass Land and Cattle Company which then became the largest and most important cattle owners on the Pecos River in New Mexico, and the Seven K. L. name was changed to Bar V. Ranch.

About forty cowboys were employed on the ranch at times and five hundred saddle horses were used by the cattle outfit. Mr. Urton would never keep a dangerous horse. He was known throughout the ranching country as a cattleman who protected his men in every way possible. During the many years he was engaged in the cattle business, there was never an accident nor a death of any of his cow hands.

Mr. Urton's wife Maria Urton died in Los Angeles California March 21, 1909.

Mr, Urton's second marriage to Mrs. Anna (Swope) Betts was solemnized at Brownsville Texas in March 1915. Their deaths from "flumonia", occurred during the same year in 1929; Mr Urton on February 27, and Mrs. Urton's a week later - March 4.

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William Cooley Urton (oldest son of William G. Urton) and [Mamie?] (Spencer) Urton, to whom he was married in 1915, have one daughter, Francis, born in Roswell in 1920. They live on the fine Urton farm 3 miles Northeast of Roswell.

Benjamin Vorrell Urton, the younger son of William G. Urton, lives in Oklahoma. He was married in 1909 to Miss Bess James of Roswell. A son was born to this union, whom they named Jason James. Bess James died at her home in Roswell in 1929.

Benjamin Urton's second marriage to Mrs. William Underwood occurred at [?] Oklahoma in 1932.

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Members of the William G. Urton family have been loyal members of the Methodist Church, South, at Roswell for nearly forty years, during which time they have been liberal contributors to the building fund of two beautiful church homes and to all church organizations and interests.

Mr. Cooley Urton and the old round-up wagon of the Bar V Ranch, in the Old-Timers' parade every year are interesting reminders of his father, William G. Urton who was known, and will always be remembered as one of the finest pioneer cattlemen, who assisted in establishing the great cattle industry of Southeast New Mexico.